
A Statistical Analysis of Diversity in the Printz Awards

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Abstract

This quantitative study investigates the diversity of the American Library Association's Michael L. Printz Award which is given for outstanding young adult literature titles. The award's website notes that it strives for diversity amongst the award winning or honored titles. This study uses quantitative analysis to determine if the committee's statement is valid along two categories: narrator's gender and narrator's ethnicity/race which served as the variables for the study. The study examined 91 book titles including the 18 award winning books and the 73 honorary titles in order to gain a broader understanding of the gender and racial/ethnic identities of the titles' narrators. Research was conducted using several book-centered websites to determine narrator's identities. The study includes implications for further research for youth literary awards committees, teachers and other educational stakeholders, with several organizations challenging the young adult literary world to diversify its titles, as well as recommendations for future researchers.

Keywords: quantitative analysis, diversity, young adult literature, Printz Award

The Michael L. Printz award is presented annually by the American Library Association's (ALA) Young Adult Library Services (YALS) to authors who write literature for teenagers. The ALA's (2019a) website explains, "the Michael L. Printz Award annually honors the best book written for teens, based entirely on its literary merit each year. In addition, the Printz Committee names up to four honor books, which also represent the best writing in young adult literature" (para. 1). With young adult literature becoming popular with adults as much as young adults, the award has become more recognizable to the public. Prominent authors including John Green, Rainbow Rowell, Terry Pratchett and Angie Thomas have works which have been awarded a Printz Award or have works included as honorary titles. Printz Award-winning authors become well-known, as the award launches many literary careers. These authors are followed by young readers throughout their adolescences and into adulthood (Kitchener, 2017). The works have an impact on their future reading lives and reading habits (Cart, 2008). These books bring to light many social issues that teens experience or that are nonexistent in a young reader's world. Cart (2008) writing for the YALSA states, "Thus, to see oneself in a young adult book is to receive the reassurance that one is not alone after all, not other, not alien, but instead, a viable part of a larger community of beings who share a common humanity" (para. 12). Reading helps readers of all ages realize struggles and possibilities because fiction is often rooted in real-life conflicts and people. The award's Criteria states "We hope

that the award will have a wide *audience* among readers from 12 to 18 but *popularity* is not the criterion for this award, nor is *message*. In accordance with the Library Bill of Rights, *controversy* is not something to avoid, In fact, we want a book that readers will talk about” (ALA, 2019a, para. 1, emphasis in the original). The award focuses on multiple parts of novel that make it great – voice, writing style, characters and theme/s. One major feature of a novel is the narrator, who is the reader’s tour guide in a literary adventure.

Printz Award winning books are trusted by teachers and school stakeholders to be quality literature that will engage students’ reading while also bringing to light important social issues that impact young adults’ worlds. Gaffney (2014) explains, “The 1990s and 2000s were marked by an explosion of YA literature in a variety of genres and subgenres and were characterized by increased diversity of teen protagonists. Forays into difficult topics such as dating violence, cutting, eating disorders, and suicide were accompanied by greater openness to portraying the diversity of teen experience, including lives of gay and lesbian (and later, bisexual and transgendered) teenagers” (Whickens, as quoted in Gaffney, 2014, p. 732). Due to this, Printz awarded books also are often challenged by concerned parents and stakeholders because the works take on current events, social and political issues, and taboo subjects (GLBTQ issues, sex, drugs, and death) that adults want to limit young adults’ exposure to, yet are unwilling to tackle through conversation. Gaffney (2014) notes, “In fact, conservative activists tended not to see YA literature as literature at all but as either propaganda intended to indoctrinate impressionable youth or as pornography designed to titillate them. They also routinely lumped teen and child readers together, emphasized the younger end of recommended age ranges, and argued that teenagers were not ‘young adults’ but children” (p. 732). Thus, these books become a safe place for young readers to safely explore and ponder hard to discuss subjects. Dimmit (2001) point out that the first Printz awards focused on books with topics of rape, juvenile incarceration, friendships, and family issues. Printz award-winning books take on these issues and bring them into the spotlight for students to experience and realize in their own lives.

I am an avid reader and discovered through my wanderings in bookish culture that literary awards are currently being challenged to include more female and non-binary authors, more authors of color, and books with diverse casts of characters. As a classroom teacher, I used book award lists as a source of trusted works to recommend to students. I also included award-winning titles in my classroom library, as my former school’s library was long-overdue for an overhaul. My school’s library included few popular authors or newly released books which students wanted to read and recommend to their friends. America’s classrooms are becoming more diverse; therefore, young adult literature should present young readers with characters of various ethnicities and races experiencing recognizable conflicts and themes. Students should be able to see themselves in the literature that they read. Young adult literature focuses on young characters’ experiences, can create a peer relationship between a character and reader. Young adult readers should be able to relate to a character’s experience but should

also relate to the character himself or herself. One such award that honors multiple adolescents' experiences, the Michael L. Prinz Award promises in its mission statement to include a variety of works that reflect young readers' realities. It promises in its mission that statement to include a variety of works that reflect young readers' realities. Young readers want to encounter characters who resemble them in the works they read. More races, genders, socioeconomic classes, belief systems, and ethnicities should be showcased in titles for adolescent and teen readers. This leads to the research questions for this study:

1. What is the relationship between Printz Award winners/honorary titles and a narrator's gender and ethnicity?
2. Are titles picked for the award equal in the number of male and female narrators?
3. Are ethnicities equally represented?

These questions are important because the award seeks to be representative of teen readers; therefore, one would expect that there are an equal number of Printz books with male narrators as female narrators and from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. As of 2018, there were 18 books who have been awarded the Printz, and 73 named honor books, thus an equal number should be narrated or about teen girls' experiences as teen boys' experiences as well as being from an equal number of race or ethnicities. The Printz Award becomes part of culturally relevant pedagogy proposed by Ladson-Billings (1994) by providing what Style (1988/1996) calls mirrors and windows for students to see themselves in what they read both in and outside the classroom. Bishop (1990) furthers this notion by proposing mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors, so that students can see themselves in the curriculum and readings, but also allows for students who have different experiences to realize their classmates' realities, and hopefully, come together through reading. Students can also come together through reading. Cart (2008) notes

Another value of young adult literature its capacity for fostering understanding, empathy, and compassion by offering vividly realized portraits of the lives – exterior and interior – of individuals who are unlike the reader. In this way young adult literature invites its readership to embrace the humanity it shares with those who – if not for the encounter in reading – might forever remain strangers or -worse – irredeemably 'other' (para. 13).

In order for the Printz Award's claim for a diverse representation in the books chosen as honorable and winning titles an equal number of books should be narrated from an equal number of genders, races, and ethnicities.

Literature Review

Theoretical Frameworks

Mirrors and Windows

Developed by Emily Style at the National SEED Project, the concept of mirrors and windows encourages the creation and implementation of a diverse curricula. Style (1988/1996) defines ‘mirrors and windows’ as “If the student is understood as occupying a dwelling of self, education needs to enable the student to look through window frames in order to see the realities of others and into mirrors in order to see her/his own reality reflected” (para. 5). Students must be able to see themselves in what they learn but must also come to understand their classmates’ realities. McElhiney (2000) in writing of multicultural women’s poetry, summarizes Style with “windows into the worldviews of someone from another culture or as mirrors that reflect our own cultures” (p. 42). Style (1988/1996) also notes “we need to acknowledge that this perspective is in line with the ancient liberal arts tradition which pursues multiple perspectives” (p. 3). She reminds readers of the Golden Rule, that “to ‘do unto others as you would have them do unto you’ takes one’s own sensibilities and projects them through the window onto the other” (pp. 3-4). Style (1988/1996) comments that white males find themselves throughout the curriculum, but “women and men of color, on the other hand, find almost no mirrors of themselves in the house of curriculum; for them it is often all windows” (p. 4). McElhiney (2000) provides a response to this, “In reading multicultural women’s poetry, in addition to paying attention to setting, narrative point of view, symbols, images, and style, we must also look to racial/ethnic traditions, conventions, worldviews, historical events, and sociological conditions affecting the respective women’s writings, as well as our own responses” (p. 41). Just as McElhiney’s women poets challenge themselves to read widely and broadly, so should teachers and students be challenged to read inclusive texts and propose these texts’ inclusion in the curriculum.

Students’ realities are often not reflected in the books they read at school (Flores, Medina, Durand, & Balsingham, 2016, p. 77). Style (1988/1996) explains, “All students deserve a curriculum which mirrors their own experience back to them, upon occasion – thus validating it in the public world of the school. But curriculum must also insist upon the fresh air of windows into the experience of others – who also need and deserve the public validation of the school curriculum” (p. 4). Students may not find themselves equally or fairly represented in society but should have opportunities to be represented in the curriculum from which they learn. Graff (2017) explains, “Published texts can be considered a way of legitimizing one’s presence in the world. Seeing one’s self or lifestyle reflected in print validates one’s presence, and some might argue, one’s significance, in the world” (p. 14). American society is becoming more diverse and diverse students should be able to see themselves in the works that they read, particularly if they are part of the intended audience.

Several writers and researchers have noted the importance of creating opportunities for creating windows and mirrors for young readers through culturally relevant pedagogy and diversity in school curriculums, encouraging students to read broadly and widely outside their cultural experience (Hickney & Hopenwasser, 2013; Boyd, Causey, & Galda, 2015; Connors & Rosh, 2015). Graff also notes that young readers who have been exposed to culturally diverse literature may also choose to read culturally diverse titles for pleasure. “Conversely, youth who are not afforded these continual opportunities to access and interact with culturally relevant literature may develop apathy, ambivalence, or animosity toward reading,” which is linked to young people’s reading motivations or lack thereof (Graff, 2017, p. 14). Graff uses the “ethos of reception” to explain the importance of cultural recognition, noting, “Often discussed within the context of immigration, an ‘ethos of reception’ speaks to the shaping of one’s identity by the recognition, misrecognition, or absence of recognition of the self by others, particularly in the dominant culture” (p. 14). Creating opportunities for students to see other cultures in literature meant for them is an important step in making room for diverse experiences in the classroom and the curriculum.

Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors

Bishop (1994) frames mirrors and windows into a way of understanding young adult literature through multicultural literacy. She comments, “When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part. Our classrooms need to be places where all children from all the cultures that make up the salad bowl of American society can find their mirrors” (Bishop, 1994, para. 4). Bishop also states that mirrors and windows as a means of challenging dominant culture as well, noting that young readers from dominant cultures learn from literature with characters from various cultures, ethnicities, and races. Bishop (1994) explains, “Children from dominant social groups have always found their mirrors in books, but they, too, have suffered from the lack of availability of books about others” (para. 5). In reading about another young person’s realities and conflicts, young readers learn about themselves. Bishop (1994) continues “They need the books as windows onto reality, not just on imaginary worlds. They need books that will help them understand the multicultural nature of the world they live in, and their place as a member of just one group, as well as their connection to all other humans” (para. 4). In reading books with characters from various cultures and backgrounds, students who live in homogenous communities are able to see other young people’s lives.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Ladson-Billings (1994) proposal of a culturally relevant pedagogy fits with Style’s (1988/1996) concept of ‘windows and mirrors.’ Ladson-Billing (1994) explains, “however, by situating it in a more critical paradigm, a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy would necessarily propose to do three things – produce students who can achieve academically, produce students who can demonstrate cultural competence, and develop students who can

both understand and critique the existing social order” (p. 474). Teachers using culturally relevant pedagogy help students realize their own realities and how to empathize with peers in and outside of the classroom. Carter and Darling-Hammond (2016) explain that using culturally relevant pedagogy “teachers find ways to know and value who their students are, and envision and support their potential” (p. 604). Windows and mirrors contributes to a culturally relevant pedagogy because students develop cultural competence through reading about cultures outside of their own experience. Teachers and other educational stakeholders can help bridge cultural gaps by providing and recommending literature with diverse settings, characters, and conflicts which span gender, racial, and ethnic differences. Reading diverse literature, especially literature written for their specific age range, encourages students to understand common conflicts occur across cultures, yet some young people’s internal and external conflicts are also caused by cultures. Understanding cultural conflicts forces students to question their own cultural norms and critically analyze how other young people live, face conflicts, and learn across cultures.

Recently, with the publications of books like *The Hate U Give* and *American Born Chinese*, researchers are encouraging the young literature community to consider how these texts can help young readers see themselves in the texts they read in and out of curriculum reading. Guthrie and Humenick cited in Barry’s (2013) study of urban 8th graders’ reading preferences and perceptions, note that “having award books available that celebrate all of these racial identities would allow students to choose books and choice is a factor known to be important to motivate students to read” (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004 as cited in Barry, 2013, p. 364). Boyd, Causey, and Galda comment that “to educate all children appropriately, teachers need more books that depict diverse lifestyles, opportunities, beliefs, choices, and worldviews in addition to books that focus on the status quo” (p. 380). Teachers play a vital role in helping their students encounter lives existing outside of the school through the literary works they provide young learners inside the classroom. Providing students with multiple perspectives of young peoples who deal with similar conflicts and joys of young adulthood helps them empathize with youth who are not like them. Boyd, Causey, and Galda (2014) provide a large list of culturally diverse literary awards focused toward young readers along with a list of recommended authors and titles (pp. 381-383). Coombs and Mayan (2015) use of diverse young adult literature with S.E. Hinton’s (1968) *The Outsiders* to chronicles how the classic young-adult novel challenged students’ understandings of outsiders. Mayan writes of her own seventh-graders’ reading of the novel as they develop their beliefs about outsiders in their own lives. The authors explain, “She [Mayan] hoped to use literature to help her students consider the perspectives of those on the margins, thus interrogating how it felt to be an ‘outsider’ and how social pressure and expectations can affect their choices and lived experiences” (p. 45). Coombs and Mayan (2015) provide a list of suggested texts exploring “What Does It Mean to be an Outsider” for both whole-class readings and classroom libraries (p. 47), with several titles being Printz award-winning or honorary titles. The recent research in diverse young adult literature’s use in

the classroom, especially with popular and award-winning titles show how culturally relevant pedagogy can positively inspire students to see a myriad of lived experiences in the pages they read.

Representations in Young Adult Literature

Why is diversity important in young adult literature? Adolescence and teenage years are fundamental for budding readers. As many teens grow, their love for reading becomes compromised with budding social lives and schedules packed with extracurricular activities and sports. Reading often falls by the wayside. To better engage teen readers, they must be able to see themselves in the books they read yet also encounter different people, cultures, and communities in the literature they read. Coombs and Mayans (2015) comment “Through sharing our stories and our experiences, we can come to better understand and empathize with those around us even as we undermine stereotypes and learn to recognize elements of the ‘other’ in ourselves” (p. 55). Coombs and Mayans’ article highlights how encouraging students to be social about what they read can help build empathy and understanding within the classroom which may have ripple effects outside the classroom. The Printz Award’s website states “Librarianship focuses on individuals in all their diversity, and that focus is a fundamental value of the Young Adult Library Services Association and its members. Diversity is, thus, honored in the association and in the collections and services that libraries provide to young readers” (ALA, 2019). In recent years, diversity has become an important theme in discussions about young adult literature. Boyd, Causey, and Galda (2014) explain of the state of youth literature “One con is that – although gains have been made – there are *still* not enough books being published that are outside of the white, middle class, heterosexual world” (p. 380, emphasis in the original). noted the Cart (2010) notes of Printz Award winners, “No matter how diverse they may be, what all these titles have in common is richness of character, an attribute that separates literary fiction from popular fiction, in which character often takes a back seat to plot...But story in these books is always in service to character” (p. 29). Stakeholders in the literary world have become more aware of the stories published. The public wants more diverse representation in the works they read including story plots, character ethnicities, and social conflicts. Stakeholders in education have become leaders in this movement, as many teachers want multicultural literature to be a part of their curriculums and libraries.

The purpose of this study was to determine if the Printz’s Award winning or honored titles were equal in terms of diversity. Diverse representation is claimed in the Printz Award’s Criteria statement; therefore, an equal number of female and male narrators should be represented in the award-winning or honored titles. Furthermore, an equal number of gender and races or ethnicities should be equally represented in titles chosen as winners or honored titles. Teachers and education stakeholders, like parents, librarians, and administrators look to literary award lists to find well-known and engaging titles for young readers. Award lists uncover books which have important and sometimes challenging social issues which students may encounter in their own lives or in the

future. Students encountering their own experiences, by narrators and characters who resemble them and their struggles and joys, is an important part of a student's reading life. This quantitative study sought to determine if the Printz Award winning and honored titles were equal in narrators' genders and ethnic/racial representation to determine if the Printz Award was as diverse as the students who read the recommended titles. This study examines the 91 Printz Award winning titles and honored titles by researching narrators' gender and race/ethnicity through internet searches via book-centered websites and resources to determine if the award's claim for diversity amongst the chosen titles was valid.

Methods

Data Collection

Initial data for this study were collected from the YASLA's website listing Printz Award winners and honor books. The original hope for this project was to focus solely on the eighteen Printz Award winners and examining the narrators' genders to assess gender equality; however, such a small sample size would not have produced enough data to fairly assess the award's fairness in equally representing male and female narrators. Thus, the Printz honor titles were added to give a fuller understanding of the research question. The variable of ethnicity was added as another means to better understand diversity and representation in young adult literature titles. Ethnicity was determined through the novel's description, an online summary, or a quote from the novel itself. For this study, five ethnic and racial descriptors were considered: White, African American (Black), Hispanic/Latino/a, Asian, or Other/Multicultural. Ethnic groups and race were analyzed together as one variable category for ease of research. Further research studies separating ethnicity and race into separate variables should be done in the future to gain a fuller understanding of racial and ethnic diversity of the listed titles.

The Printz Award winning and honorary titles were entered in an Excel worksheet. Then, an internet search was completed via several webpages, namely www.goodreads.com, a book-centered social network which also acts as a repository for book titles, authors, editions, characters, award lists, and other literary related subjects. Goodreads is quality-controlled by a team of librarians, active users (including readers), who act as the site's editors. The site has working relationships with numerous libraries across the world. Amazon as well as web-engine image searches were also completed to determine characters' ethnicities via a book's cover.

One would hope that Printz Award winning and honored titles would have equal representation of male and female narrators since the award's beginning in 2000. Secondly, one would also expect, given the YASLA's mission for the award to be diverse, with equal representations amongst narrators' races and ethnicities. The null hypotheses of this project is firstly, that there will be equal representation of male and female narrators and secondly, that there will be an equal representations amongst narrators' races and ethnicities.

Data Analysis

A chi-squared procedure was run to determine if a narrator's gender and ethnicity was related to Printz Award winning and honorary titles. According to Laerdes Statistics (2019), the chi squared test has two assumptions. First, the two variables must be measured at the ordinal or nominal level. Both gender and race/ethnicity are nominal variables. Second, the variable should consist of two or more categorical independent groups (para. 2-4). Gender was grouped into male, female, both (multiple narrative perspectives), or none (no gender indicated). (Gender identification along the LGBTQ spectrum was not considered for this study, but should be considered in further research). Ethnicity was grouped as White, African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, or Other/Multicultural. Ethnicity and race are often lumped together in surveys; therefore, they have been included as one variable in this study. These statistical assumptions being met, the data were analyzed.

The following charts and graphs were derived from entering the Excel worksheet into SPSS, running a case summary, frequency distribution, a histogram to check for normality, a Cramer's V, a phi coefficient, a contingency coefficient, and a chi square test. For a detailed list of the original Excel spreadsheet and the coded version, please refer to Results section of the study for charts.

The study's total sample size included 90 titles, with one title excluded. The original data spreadsheet shows that this is normal – at least one of the sample cases (*Heart to Heart*, an honor title from 2002) does not have a narrator. Several titles have “both” voices – either because the title is nonfiction or deals with two characters of the opposite gender (ex: *Charles and Emma: The Darwins' Leap of Faith*). The report's full case summary is included in Table 1.

Table 1: Case Summary
Case Processing Summary^a

	Included		Cases Excluded		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Gender	90	98.9%	1	1.1%	91	100.0%
Ethnicity	90	98.9%	1	1.1%	91	100.0%

^aLimited to first 100 cases.

The frequency tables showed that the majority of the narrators represented are white females (at 67% and 45.1% respectively) compared to male narrators at 37.4%. The majority of narrators at 67%, are white.

The chi-square critical value, according to Table C.4 (Hinkle, et al. 2003, p. 639) in *Applied Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences* states that $\chi^2_{cv} = 26.027$, which exceeds the significance level at .01 (noted in the correlation table as being correlated). This reflects a weak relationship between race/ethnicity and gender. The study's chi squared tests for this study are in Table 2.

Table 2: Gender Ethnicity Crosstabulations

		Gender ^ Race/Ethnicity Crosstabulation						
		Race/Ethnicity					Total	
		White	African American	Hispanic/Latino	Asian	Other/Multicultural		
Gender	Female	Count	27	2	1	4	0	34
		% within Gender	79.4%	5.9%	2.9%	11.8%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Race/Ethnicity	44.3%	15.4%	25.0%	44.4%	0.0%	37.8%
		% of Total	30.0%	2.2%	1.1%	4.4%	0.0%	37.8%
		Standardized Residual	.8	-1.3	-.4	.3	-1.1	
	Male	Count	28	8	3	2	0	41
		% within Gender	68.3%	19.5%	7.3%	4.9%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Race/Ethnicity	45.9%	61.5%	75.0%	22.2%	0.0%	45.6%
		% of Total	31.1%	8.9%	3.3%	2.2%	0.0%	45.6%
		Standardized Residual	.0	.9	.9	-1.0	-1.2	
	Both	Count	3	3	0	1	0	7
		% within Gender	42.9%	42.9%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Race/Ethnicity	4.9%	23.1%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	7.8%
		% of Total	3.3%	3.3%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	7.8%
		Standardized Residual	-.8	2.0	-.6	.4	-.5	
	None	Count	3	0	0	2	3	8
		% within Gender	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	37.5%	100.0%
		% within Race/Ethnicity	4.9%	0.0%	0.0%	22.2%	100.0%	8.9%
		% of Total	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	3.3%	8.9%
		Standardized Residual	-1.0	-1.1	-.6	1.3	5.3	
Total	Count	61	13	4	9	3	90	
	% within Gender	67.8%	14.4%	4.4%	10.0%	3.3%	100.0%	
	% within Race/Ethnicity	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	67.8%	14.4%	4.4%	10.0%	3.3%	100.0%	

The Phi coefficient at .710 is close to 1.0, showing that gender and ethnicity are closely related. The contingency coefficient at .579 also shows that gender and ethnicity are moderately related. Cramer's V shows a .41 association between race/ethnicity and gender, which relates to a weak relationship between the two variables. The study's symmetric measures output is in Table 3.

Table 3: Symmetric Measures

Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.710			.000
	Cramer's V	.410			.000
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.363	.132	3.649	.000 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.276	.111	2.692	.008 ^c
N of Valid Cases		90			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Results

The study's results show that despite the Printz Award's goal to include diverse books in its award winners, the gender of the majority of winning and honor titles is female, and the ethnicity/race is white. While the American Library Association should be praised for nearly achieving gender equality in its titles, as shown by the frequency table. For the original null hypothesis that of the 90 titles who had an identifiable gendered narrator, an expectation for equal number of male and female narrators is rejected (though the percentage was close at females with 45.1% and males at 37.4%). The second part of the null hypothesis, that there would be an equal number of titles amongst the five identified races and ethnicities, was far from being equal. White narrators dominated the data at 67%, African Americans with 14.3%, Hispanic/Latinos 4.4% and Asians 9.9%; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected as well. The study's results show that more diversity is needed in the Printz Award's award winning and honorary titles in order for equal gender and racial/ethnic representation amongst the title's narrators and characters.

Conclusion and Implications for Further Research

This finding that gender inequality and lack of diversity amongst the Printz Award's winners and honorary titles is particularly troublesome, though not unexpected. Equal gender, and racial and ethnic representation is still a goal children's and young adult literature that has not been reached (Boyd, Causey, and Galda, 2014, p. 380). This is particularly problematic as American society and its classrooms become more diverse (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Young adult literature, particularly literary prizes, should represent the society from which it derives its characters, conflicts, and themes.

There are several suggestions for future research studies based upon the Printz Award. First, the Printz Award committee should continue to keep diverse protagonists and characters in mind when selecting books to

be considered for this award. Michael Cart (2010) drew attention to this a decade into the award's presence in YAL scholarship. Cart notes,

While I've been praising Printz winners and honor titles for their 'diversity,' how many of them have acknowledged persons of color or those having a different ethnic, cultural, or religious background? The answer, like so many of the Printz books – is a bit complicated Yes, four of the ten Printz winners have recognized such diversity...However of the thirty-seven honor titles, a scant seven include characters of color, and those are limited to African Americans (p. 30).

Second, the committee should also keep in mind including diverse authors. Authors often infuse their own experiences into their works and hearing of different experiences could validate young readers' own experiences during the trials and tribulations of middle and high school years. Lastly, the committee should also include more titles with characters from various gender identities and sexual orientations. Due to time limitations, these identities were not included as part of this study but should be included in future studies. It should be noted that the ALA has a specialized award, the Stonewall Award, dedicated to notable books with LGBTQ themes and characters (American Library Association, 2019b). Including more characters of varying gender, racial, and ethnic identities in the Printz Award winning and honorary titles is what young readers deserve.

The research procedures for this study should be applied to other youth-focused awards schemes to identify gaps in gender equality and diversity. Such a study would bring to light the many voices and experiences which are left in the shadow by the literary world. By bringing the absence of diverse characters into the forefront, education and literary scholarship can push authors, publishers, editors, and other stakeholders to seek and demand more representation for diverse literature.

Efforts are being made to counteract the tendency to err towards the White (often straight) male point of view in storytelling. The We Need Diverse Books campaign began with the aim of bringing a variety of voices and stories into children's and young adult literature. The organization's website explains its mission as "putting more books featuring diverse characters into the hands of all children." Their explanation of diversity reads, "We recognize all diverse experiences, including (but not limited to) LGBTQIA, Native, people of color, gender diversity, people with disabilities, and ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities" ("About WNDB," 2019). The organization pushes influencers in the literary world: authors, publishers, teachers, parents, and readers to diversify their reading experiences and pass it on to others. Youth activist Marley Dias began 1000 Black Girl Books to find and distribute books featuring black girls in youth literature (Dias, 2019). More efforts and support should be given to organizations and grass-roots efforts to diversify young learners' choices in what they read. Diversity is the future and young adult literature should showcase youth in their many forms.

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